

Social Justice Radical Math

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- o Recognize the power of mathematics as an essential analytical tool to understand and potentially change the world, rather than merely regard math as a collection of disconnected rules to be memorized and regurgitated.
- o Engage in high-level thinking about big mathematical ideas
- o Deepen their understanding of social and economic issues on local and global scales
- o Understand their own power as active citizens in building a democratic society and become equipped to play a more active role in this society
- o Become more motivated to learn math
- o Participate in actual (not just theoretical) community problem-solving projects
- o Answer this question for themselves: "Why do I have to know this?"

Economic and Social Issues

- o Prisons, racial profiling, death penalty
- o Poverty, minimum/living wage, sweatshops
- o Housing, gentrification, homeownership
- o War, defense budgets, military recruiting
- o Public Health: AIDS, asthma, health insurance, diabetes, smoking
- o Educational access, funding, testing, achievement gaps
- o Environment: pollution, hunger, food and water resources
- o Welfare, TANF
- o Immigration

Description

After talking to my students to see what issues they are concerned with at school community level and their grade level- these are probably what they are most interested in working on and learning about. I have identified the math concept/skill I want to teach based on the skills the students need to be successful and thinking about social issues that could help students understand this skill. Our units will be set in the context of a broad, open-ended question that does not have one specific answer. The larger question students will be asking is: "What are the problems my community is facing, and how can I use math to understand and address them?" But more specifically, I will pick a question that will guide the math and give focus to the unit. For example: "Which neighborhoods in our city have the highest rates of incarcerated youth, and what can we determine about the economic and demographic make-up of these communities?" or "Does race play a factor in who is getting mortgage loans in our city?" The question will have both a mathematically and social component to it.